5. Small Domestic Animals

422 231 The Mwami has a rather theoretical right of ownership of small livestock which are considered valueless by the large stockbreeders.

Consequently, the Bahutu can sell or keep for their own consumption goats and sheep.

● [235] Poultry also belongs to the Bahutu who are required to provide, without remuneration, the chicks needed for divinatory sacrifices. Hens and eggs are not eaten by natives and therefore, except in the neighborhood of European posts, have no commercial value.

Small livestock as well as poultry are the exclusive property of men.

[224] The Banyarwanda are very fond of their hunting dogs. The Batutsi will pay as much as one or two cows for a dog that is known for its hunting qualities.

6. Other Personal Property and Real Estate

423 Among the Batutsi, the husband and each of his wives live in their individual rugo, but all these dwellings belong to the husband. In the same way, among the Bahutu, the hut and its annexes belong to the husband.

422 Work tools belong to the husband. The wife and children may not lend them without his permission, except for a short time.

[60] Household utensils given the wife by her husband remain his property. But the ibirongoranywa (1), ~~that is~~ to say,

1. Cf. note 1, p. 44.

the objects, utensils, and clothing, given by the father to his daughter at the time of her marriage, often equal to the value of several cows, or even consisting of cows, belong to the wife. She may dispose of them as she chooses, except in the case of cows.

231 terribly decimated since the admission of traders in 1906. Goats are not used for sacrifices.

235 Chickens (inkoko) are the only domestic fowl of the Barundi, but they are kept only in small numbers. It is possible to wander for days through the farms of central Urundi without seeing a single chicken. There are far more in Usige, in the Tanganyika area, where they are used exclusively for trade. [439] They are sold to the Moslem Negroes of the coastal area there who like chicken and who have been very numerous since the time of the Arabs and are now numerous due to European colonization. Not only the Batussi and Bahutu but also the [262] Batwa detest chicken meat; it is an age-old food taboo which is probably of totemic origin. The breed is the one generally found in East Africa, long-legged and mostly black. The chickens are not fed at all. They have to find their own food, and for this reason they are always thin. In most of interior [782] Urundi and in Ruanda they are only used for sacrificial occasions and as oracles. They are sacrificed to the manes of deceased family members or to the spirits, Imana, Rikiranga, and Riangombe, in the same manner as sheep and cattle (see p. 135). Certain cocks are also dedicated to Imana (No. 19, p. 453). [787] To consult the oracle, the chickens are killed, and the future or the uncertainties of the present are augured from the color and position of their viscera. This is done by the sorcerers or medicine men who will, of course, read the oracle as it suits them best. The Barundi regard the eating of chicken by 262 Europeans and the Moslem Negroes of the coast as abominable. They also abhor the eating of eggs, probably for totemic reasons and not because they regard [48] eggs as excrement of the chicken, as has often been claimed, sometimes even by themselves. They know quite well that the egg contains the embryo of the chicken and therefore that a person eating eggs is really eating chicken, thereby violating the food taboo.

235 753 Van der Burgt mentions another "superstitious" custom: when a hen is found eating its own eggs or killing its chicks, the egg shells are thrown on a crossroads to prevent the hen

235 753 from doing this again. Barundi passing this way take pains not to crush the shells since the improvident person doing so would get sick (No. 19, p. 453).

231 Finally, among the domesticated animals we shall mention the dog (imbwa). His only purpose in life is to eat all the refuse. Adults and children play with him and also maltreat him. It has already been mentioned above (p. 36) that on rare occasions he is also used for hunting drives. Both mentally and physically they are most miserable curs and it is difficult to understand why, after being domesticated for so long, they have not made better progress. Perhaps their domestication does not date back as far as is generally assumed, but in that case what might be their indigenous wild ancestor? Van der Burgt says that they "tiennent du loup" (resemble the wolf) (No. 19, p. 104). This can only be an error of observation for these dogs have much more in common with a jackal than with a wolf. Perhaps the jackal is the ancestor. Yet the original stock has separated into two different breeds, unless we assume that one breed was indigenous while the other was introduced later, probably by the Bahima. One breed is yellow-brown, and its ears are pointed upright. The other one is black, white, or spotted and has drooping ears. Mixed types, however, are quite frequent. Both types have only a little hair on their tails. When they run, the stiff, jolting motions of their legs are conspicuous. I have found the same two types or varieties distributed also in Kisiba and Ruanda. In Ruanda dogs are bred in greater numbers than in Urundi, probably because they are used for hunting more than here. Since dogs are not fed, they have to take care of themselves, and of necessity they have become omnivorous. They are always hungry and very skinny. Whenever they find something to eat, they fill themselves until they are ready to burst. What Europeans find most revolting about them and the 364 Barundi consider a useful trait is that they eat human excrement. In a country where there are no pigs and only a few scavenger birds, which take care of the sanitation problem in the rest of East Africa, the dogs are of hygienic importance. Apart from this they have absolutely no social virtues. They are snappish, cowardly, thievish, very poor watchdogs, and miserable